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News Release | Council Approves St. Andrew's United Church Woodland Sanctuary Project

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lacombe, Alberta (March 25th, 2025) – Lacombe City Council approved the final design for St. Andrew's United Church's Tree Project, now known as the Woodland Sanctuary.

The Tree Planting Project is a collaborative effort between the City and the United Church to transform a 1.7-acre municipal reserve on the west end of Woodland Drive into a natural forest ecosystem with 100 native trees and shrubs and hundreds of native flowering perennials. This initiative aims to make a positive environmental impact, promote sustainability, foster community engagement, enhance mental and spiritual health, and beautify municipal areas.

"Council would like to thank St. Andrew's United Church for recognizing the importance of our community's natural environment," Mayor Grant Creasey said. "Lacombe is known for our natural spaces; this project will help ensure that trees remain part of our identity for years to come."

The design was developed and approved following a public engagement design workshop conducted by Cynthia Pohl of Living Lands Landscape + Design, contracted by the St. Andrew's Green Team. The cost of installation, design and layout work, plant material, habitat structures, and seating is over \$50K and is funded through private donations and grants through the United Church. The estimated budget for the City is \$36K over three years, which is covered within the current budget.

"We are excited to be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the formation of The United Church of Canada and its ministry in Lacombe by planting this living legacy for future generations to enjoy all the benefits of trees. We are called to 'live with respect in creation' and want to inspire others to do likewise, said Rev. Cecile Fausak, co-chair of St. Andrew's Green Team. "If anyone wishes to offer financial support or volunteer planting on June 6th-7th and 20th-21st, please email greenteam@lacombeunitedchurch.ca or call (587) 306-0191."

City staff will work with Living Lands Landscape + Design and St. Andrew's on the delivery and planting of all the plant material and trees, the path layout, the installation of habitat structures, and signage on site.

The City will manage ongoing site maintenance, including watering in the first three years, mowing of the path, and ongoing weeding as necessary.

The Woodland Sanctuary is scheduled to be available for public use by June 2025.

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